

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska

TO: S. A. Moberly
Regional Supervisor
F.R.E.D. Division
Juneau

DATE: August 12, 1975

FILE NO:

TELEPHONE NO:

FROM: Donald L. Stedeham
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Sport Fish Division
Bethel

SUBJECT: Chickamin River King Salmon Egg Take

As you are aware of, I flew the first king salmon survey with fixed wing aircraft (Dick Halia) on July 31, 1975. We flew the entire area observing the following:

Leduc Creek	-	0
Indian Creek	-	8-15
S.F. Chickamin River	-	35-45 (20-30 off Barrier Creek)
Barrier Creek	-	4
Total		<hr/> 45-65

Spawning appeared to be just getting underway since there were few fish actively spawning and some holding in the area off Barrier Creek. (Later surveys confirmed this). At this time, the ball was set rolling for gathering king salmon eggs in the Chickamin River.

On August 2, 1975, Dennis Blankenbeckler, Tom Copeland and I flew with Temsco helicopters in a Hughes 500 up the Chickamin and stopped at Indian Creek to attempt snagging the willy king salmon off his redd. All was not real successful until just before you arrived. We had only succeeded in taking one male and one green female. Finally, we did capture a ripe female and another male. All went well with the spawning of all concerned. Managed to get approximately 4,000 eggs. We later found out that we had misplaced the scale envelope. Hopefully, it will turn up in someone's gear. We expended all our opportunities available with the last batch of spawners spooking. Evidently a bear had started working this group over. Found a piece of male gonads on the bank. No aerial survey was conducted in the system to estimate the total king salmon at this time. Casual observation indicated that there were more fish on the spawning redds than during the first survey.

We then flew to the South Fork of the Chickamin River and landed on the bar just below Barrier Creek (Area 1). There were 25-30 fish actively working along this bar. We managed, by using lures (large golf-tee spinners) with weights behind, to snag 21 spawning king salmon of which three females were spent and four partially spent. Due to the glacial condition of the water, lures were necessary to let the angler see where his line was in the water. These fish must have been there for at least two or three days since all females handled were spent or partially spent.

This is a good site for collecting king salmon off the spawning area. The water is fairly swift, but the fish can be landed down stream in an eddy or side pool.

On August 5, we went out again to the same two areas and sampled 16 fish (8 in Indian Creek and 8 in Area 1). Of the 6 females collected, 1 was green, 1 spent, 2 partial spent and 2 ripe. There was an estimated 3,400 eggs collected.

An aerial survey was also flown to estimate king salmon numbers (Survey map attached):

Ledue Creek	-	6
Indian Creek	-	99
Side stream above		
Indian Creek		11
Barrier Creek		9
S.E. Chickamin River-		<u>75</u>
Total		191

We did not survey Chaca Creek or King Creek.

Fish in Indian Creek were really spooky. We did observe a brown bear which could account for their spooky behavior. We had trouble collecting males for the one female and while we were trying to catch a large male, the female died so I spawned her with a jack salmon. I felt that it was not worth our time to attempt to capture fish in small creeks where the bears would be a competitor. Perhaps if we were there before the bears really got to feeding on these salmon, it could be an easier operation in these shallow waters.

August 10th was our last escapement from our abodes into the wilderness. Another Saturday of teaming enjoyment and frolicking on the rocks of the Chickamin River.

It appeared that our favorite fishing bar was fairly devoid of the female king salmon. We only managed to catch 2 females of which one was spent and one with 300 eggs. But Barrier Creek had a few in the lower riffle and that area produced two ripe females for about 8,000 eggs.

After all else failed to produce in this area, we took off down stream to a riffle at the bottom of the small gorge - about 1.5 miles above the forks. There were about 20 spawners in this area (Area #2). Managed to catch 5 males and 3 females. One female was 80% spent and the other 2 were ripe. These fish appeared to have recently moved on to this riffle area. I had not previously seen them in this area.

In all, we had a successful day collecting an estimated 16, 100 eggs.

Overall, we handled 21 females of which 6 were ripe (unspawned), 8 partial spent, 1 green and 5 spent. We are missing scales on one female and it does not show on the attached summary sheet.

Estimate the total egg take will range between 30-40,000 and that they are all at the Deer Mountain Hatchery in Ketchikan. Guess we will not know the exact numbers until the eyed-stage. I personally would like to see all these eggs or their resultant smolts used for future brook stock for the back Behm Canal area. I do not feel that these fish should be returned to the area of catch until a brood stock is established.

I also suggest that Dennis Blankenbeckler and Tom Copeland should each receive a letter of gratitude for their help in this project. Without their assistance, I feel that this project would have been less successful.

CC: R. Madam
D. Blankenbeckler
A. Schmidt
P. Kissner